

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

- 1 1. (Currently amended) A computer-implemented method of facilitating a
2 distributed search for a procurement request, comprising:
3 receiving the procurement request from a user, wherein the procurement
4 request is subject to organizational procurement controls, and wherein the
5 procurement request involves requesting goods and/or services;
6 requesting a remote supplier to conduct a remote search to satisfy the
7 procurement request, wherein the remote supplier is an external supplier and/or
8 vendor who is located outside of the organization to which the user belongs, and
9 wherein the request identifies to the remote supplier a context in which to execute
10 the remote search;
11 initiating a local search of a local information source;
12 receiving results of the remote search;
13 filtering results of the remote search by applying the organizational
14 procurement controls to the results of the remote search, whereby the
15 organizational procurement controls can be applied to results of the remote search
16 which is performed by the remote supplier;
17 merging said remote search results with results of the local search; and
18 presenting said merged search results to the user, wherein presenting
19 comprises displaying said merged search results with a single user interface
20 employed by the local information source.

1 2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 filtering said remote search results with a set of local rules.

1 3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein said filtering comprises
2 editing said remote search results according to a set of rules regarding information
3 that may be presented to the user.

1 4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 selecting said remote information source from multiple information
3 sources.

1 5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said remote search is
2 conducted without the user being connected to the remote information source.

1 6. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the remote
2 information source employs a user interface different from the user interface
3 employed by the local information source.

1 7-8 (Canceled).

1 9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said context
2 comprises an identity of the user.

1 10. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said context
2 comprises an identity of an organization operating the local information source.

1 11. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said context
2 comprises a language.

1 12 (Canceled).

1 13. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said remote search and said
2 local search are performed at least partially in parallel.

1 14. (Currently amended) A computer readable storage medium storing
2 instructions that, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform a
3 computer-implemented method for facilitating a distributed search for a
4 procurement request, the method comprising:

5 receiving the procurement request from a user, wherein the procurement
6 request is subject to organizational procurement controls, and wherein the
7 procurement request involves requesting goods and/or services;

8 requesting a remote supplier to conduct a remote search to satisfy the
9 procurement request, wherein the remote supplier is an external supplier and/or
10 vendor who is located outside of the organization to which the user belongs, and
11 wherein the request identifies to the remote supplier a context in which to execute
12 the remote search;

13 initiating a local search of a local information source;

14 receiving results of the remote search;

15 filtering results of the remote search by applying the organizational
16 procurement controls to the results of the remote search, whereby the
17 organizational procurement controls can be applied to results of the remote search
18 which is performed by the remote supplier;

19 merging said remote search results with results of the local search; and

20 presenting said merged search results to the user, wherein presenting

21 | comprises displaying said merged search results with a single user interface

22 employed by the local information source.

1 15. (Currently amended) A method of conducting a distributed electronic
2 search for a procurement request concerning a desired procurement item, wherein
3 the procurement request is subject to organizational procurement controls, and
4 wherein the procurement request involves requesting goods and/or services,
5 comprising:
6 receiving from a user a description of an item the user desires to procure;
7 issuing a request to a remote supplier to conduct a first search for items
8 matching said description, without the user connecting to the remote procurement
9 information source, wherein the remote supplier is an external supplier and/or
10 vendor who is located outside of the organization to which the user belongs, and
11 wherein said issuing comprises providing the remote procurement information
12 source with information specifying a context in which to execute the requested
13 search;
14 providing the remote procurement information source with contextual
15 information for said first search;
16 performing a second search of a local procurement system for items
17 matching said description;
18 receiving a first set of results responsive to said first search;
19 filtering said first set of results by applying the organizational procurement
20 controls to the first set of results of the remote search, whereby the organizational
21 procurement controls can be applied to the first set of results of the remote search
22 which is performed by the remote supplier; and
23 presenting to the user, through a single interface employed by the local
24 procurement information source, said first set of results and a second set of results
25 responsive to said second search.

1 16. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising:

2 authenticating one or more of the user and the local procurement
3 information system to the remote procurement information source.

1 17. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising:
2 selecting the remote procurement information source from a set of
3 procurement information sources.

1 18 (Canceled)

1 19. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein said filtering comprises
2 removing from said first set of results any items that violate the procurement
3 rules.

1 20. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein the procurement rules are
2 designed to restrict items that may be procured by the user.

1 21. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein said first search and said
2 second search are performed at least partially in parallel.

1 22. (Currently amended) A computer readable storage medium storing
2 instructions that, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform a
3 method for conducting a distributed electronic search for a procurement request,
4 the method comprising:

5 receiving from a user a description of an item the user desires to procure;

6 issuing a request to a remote supplier to conduct a first search for items
7 matching said description, without the user connecting to the remote procurement
8 information source, wherein the remote supplier is an external supplier and/or
9 vendor who is located outside of the organization to which the user belongs;

10 providing the remote procurement information source with contextual
11 information for said first search;
12 performing a second search of a local procurement system for items
13 matching said description;
14 receiving a first set of results responsive to said first search;
15 filtering said first set of results by applying the organizational procurement
16 controls to the first set of results of the remote search, whereby the organizational
17 procurement controls can be applied to the first set of results of the remote search
18 which is performed by the remote supplier; and
19 presenting to the user, through a single interface employed by the local
20 procurement information source, said first set of results and a second set of results
21 responsive to said second search.

1 23. (Previously presented) A system for facilitating a distributed search for
2 information for a procurement request, comprising:
3 a local information source configured to provide information to local users
4 through a first user interface;
5 a communication module configured to enable said local information
6 source to send contextual information for a search to a remote supplier, wherein
7 the remote supplier is configured to provide information to users through a second
8 user interface different from the first user interface, and wherein the remote
9 supplier is an external supplier and/or vendor who is located outside of the
10 organization to which the user belongs;
11 a set of rules regarding information that may be displayed to a first local
12 user; and
13 a processor configured to initiate, in response to a request from the first
14 local user:
15 a remote search of the remote information source; and

16 a local search of said local information source;
17 wherein results of said remote search are filtered by applying the
18 organizational procurement controls to the results of the remote search, whereby
19 the organizational procurement controls can be applied to results of the remote
20 search which is performed by the remote supplier and then merged with results of
21 said local search for display to the first local user through the first user interface.

1 24. (Original) The system of claim 23, further comprising:
2 authentication means for authenticating one or more of the system and the
3 first local user to the remote information source.

1 25. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein said remote search and
2 said local search are performed in parallel.

1 26. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the
2 organizational procurement controls include at least one of, an upper limit on a
3 price, an upper limit on a quantity, a prohibition against a given supplier, a limit to
4 a given brand, a limit to a given model, a limit on a delivery option, and a limit on
5 payment terms.

1 27. (Previously presented) The method of claim 15, wherein the
2 organizational procurement controls include at least one of, an upper limit on a
3 price, an upper limit on a quantity, a prohibition against a given supplier, a limit to
4 a given brand, a limit to a given model, a limit on a delivery option, and a limit on
5 payment terms.

1 28. (Previously presented) The system of claim 23, wherein the
2 organizational procurement controls include at least one of, an upper limit on a

3 price, an upper limit on a quantity, a prohibition against a given supplier, a limit to
4 a given brand, a limit to a given model, a limit on a delivery option, and a limit on
5 payment terms.